

FROM ME TO YOU

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 2015

Sunil Mattu's Newsletter

REMEMBRANCE DAY: NOVEMBER 11TH

As Canadian citizens and residents, we are privileged to live in a free and tolerant nation. We treasure our liberty, respect one another, and support those in need, both within our country and beyond our borders. We view these freedoms and beliefs as Canadian values. In some nations, individuals look at Canada with envy. Life in many parts of the world is difficult, for far too many, impossible. We must not forget that a tremendous price was paid for the freedoms and rights we take for granted. Men and women in service paid what was often the ultimate price for what we enjoy. And Canadian

continue to sacrifice all so that our way of life is protected both here at home and abroad.

In Canada we recognize the efforts of the brave men and women who have served on our behalf through Veteran's Week – which begins today, November 5th - as well as on Remembrance Day, November 11th. In Alberta, we attach so much importance to their sacrifice that we recognize Remembrance Day as a Civic Holiday. It is not a day of celebration but rather of remembrance of the courage, service, and sacrifice of Canadian Veterans.

Third Academy will be holding a special Remembrance Day Ceremony for our students and staff at the school on Friday, November 6, 2015 at 9 am. You are welcome to participate as well. We also have poppies available by donation.

Third Academy encourages you to remind your child why Remembrance Day is such an important day. If possible, attend a Remembrance Day Ceremony or observe with him or her two minutes of silence at 11 am on Wednesday, November 11th. Let us honor the brave men and woman who served for us.



Board of Directors

John Crosser, Chairman
Anthony Chim, Treasurer
Zeljko Puric, Director
Jeevan Mangat, Director

Founding Patron

Ed Whalen

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Nomi Whalen

Patrons

Glenn Olson
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Ashid Bahl

Founder

Dr. S. Lal Mattu



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FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

In this issue of From Me To You, I thought I would try a somewhat different approach with the content and share with you information of the more important “files” resting on my desk as the Executive Director of Third Academy. While I meet with most of our parents and guardians to discuss matters such as admissions, volunteer work, or just to chat over coffee, it is generally with the members of my Leadership Team and our Board that I provide a more macro perspective of what is happening in Third Academy’s central office. Third Academy is more than just a place to send your children to get an education. We are a community committed to working together to provide the best programming possible for children with special education needs. To improve communication with all of the stakeholders within our community, I decided to take this opportunity to tell you about what I am working on. I hope you find this material insightful

in better understanding our common goals!

Alberta Education

Third Academy operates under the authority of Alberta Education. With the election of a new provincial government this past May we expected that there would be changes as these were promises made in Premier Notley’s election campaign. What was less certain, however, was the timing and specific details of how these commitments would be implemented. Now that the new government has had an opportunity to review their files and draft a budget we have a much clearer understanding of the direction Alberta Education will be taking.

Rehana Mattu, Joe Smith, and I recently attended Alberta Education’s Fall Administrators’ Meeting. Department officials opened with greetings from Education Minister David Eggen. Agenda items included: Severe Disabilities

Submission Requirements, Teaching Quality Standard & Principal Practice Standard, Updates from Field Services, and an Annual Education Results Report (AERR) & 3 Year Plan Working Session. Third Academy is pleased that Alberta Education’s Business Plan indicates that there is a commitment to stable, increasing funding over the 3 year cycle. As our regulator, Alberta Education officials will be visiting Third Academy during the course of the year. We look forward to welcoming them to our super school.



Sunil Mattu, Executive Director

“Third Academy is pleased that Alberta Education’s Business Plan indicates that there is a commitment to stable, increasing funding over the 3 year cycle.”

FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

Governance

As Third Academy's Executive Director, I report to our Board of Directors: John Crosser, Anthony Chim, Jeevan Mangat, and Zeljko Puric. Third Academy is held accountable by the Province of Alberta for our planning and performance. Our financials are audited annually. Third Academy's fiscal year runs from 01 September 2014 to 31 August 2015. Sabu Alexander, Third Academy's Chief Financial Officer, is currently working to complete our annual audit. Audited Financial Statements (AFS) for the year end 31 August 2015 are to be submitted to Alberta Education by 30 November 2015. With the AFS we also provide Alberta Education our Annual Education Results Report (AERR)

2015 and 3 Year Education Plan 2015-2016 to 2017-2018. With these documents we demonstrate our performance for the previous year and our plan for the following three years. It is the responsibility of Third Academy's Board to accept the AFS 2015 and approve the AERR & 3 Year Education Plan at a meeting to be scheduled later this month. At the same time, Third Academy's Annual General Meeting will be held. Additionally, the new Board will be appointed. Third Academy's Board follows a strategic governance model. In this, our 19th year of operation, I am pleased to recount the fantastic men and women who have served at Third Academy's Board table over the years. Thank you, all, for making a difference in the lives of our children.



FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

Human Resources

It is always “the people that really make the difference”. I am so pleased that our children have the benefit of good people in their lives. In my mind, “good people make good teachers”. We are missing one of our staff, Gwendolyn Marsh, who is on leave. At the same time, we welcome aboard Dianna McBride into the EI classroom. Dianna previously has worked in the Renfrew Educational Services system. We are working to bring Speech & Language and Occupational Therapy services on stream this school year as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, there has been challenge to bring last year’s team on board. Zeljko Puric, Third Academy’s Chief Psychologist, has been very busy completing assessments with his 8 member psychology team. Beyond that, I want to thank Third Academy’s dedicated team of bus drivers - good people - for bringing our children to school, safely, every day.

Facility/Plant

We are doing well with the consolidation of our ‘two schools under one roof’ this year. Every nook and cranny of our centrally located campus is being utilized. The space is neat and tidy. The tack boards are filling with the work of our students. I am especially pleased to see the “nod”

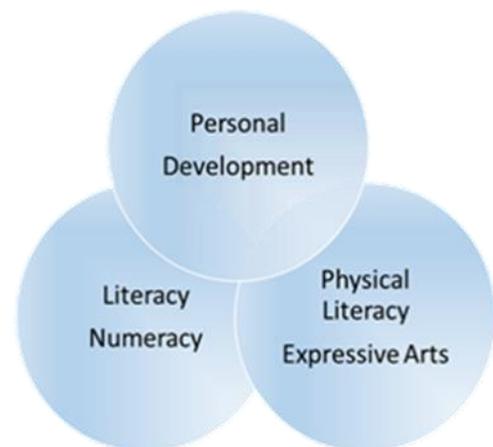
towards our Third Warts... and All theme filling the hallways. Having our students visit Blackfoot Park, twice per week, is alleviating the space crunch. Bruce Freeman, Transportation Manager, is pleased to have accepted delivery this month of a new 47 passenger bus to replace a bus we retired last year and bring our fleet back up to 9 busses.

Programming

Effective instructional practices enable quality programming to accomplish student success. Our therapeutic model is very simple but, when implemented effectively, it works. I am pleased to see our programming initiatives: Literacy/Numeracy, Physical Literacy, and Expressive Arts “come to life” in our classrooms.

Both our Autism Unit and Technology Initiatives are all seeing progress with

our Sensory Room being built and the delivery of 40 laptops from Computers for Schools. It is important to remember what Dr. S. Lal Mattu, Third Academy’s Founder, has always said: “the teacher is the program”. In this regard, we are truly blessed.



FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

Fund Development

This year, Dr. S. Lal Mattu has taken on a role as “Third Academy’s Ambassador-at-Large”. Together with Robert Carey, a parent volunteer, he is working to “build the relationships that will raise money to support best possible programming” for your children. This work, over the past two months, has included meeting with: Rotary Canyon Meadows, Rotary Downtown, Toastmasters Clubs Calgary, Calgary Business Referrals Network, Sikh Professional and Business Society, and numerous individuals. Bruce Freeman, Third Academy’s Communications Officer, has developed a Fundraising Brochure. All staff will have personalized business cards to ‘reach out’ once we return to school following the Remembrance Day break.

At this time, I want to put into everyone’s mind: we need to remember that raising funds to support our program is a shared responsibility. That means it is happening at my level, in the classrooms, and also at the parent level as our PACs mobilize their fundraising arm with casinos, bingos, and raffles. I am pleased to report that our 5th Annual Run Santa Run will be held on 12 December 2015 and 18th Annual Hidden Heroes Gala will be held on 19 May 2016. Both represent wonderful opportunities to bring our community together. All the money we raise, together, will help each and every one of our students

I also ask everyone to ‘reach out’ to their community. Share Third Academy’s story and tell how Third Academy has made a positive difference in your child’s life and, in turn, that of your family’s. Spread the word: thirdacademy.ca.



FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

Community Engagement

Alberta is a progressive province in the field of education. A consortium of Alberta Education Partners developed a program to implement teaching practices that best inspire student learning. The goal is “put into practice an educational change that achieves its intended outcomes, the most important of which is improved student learning.”

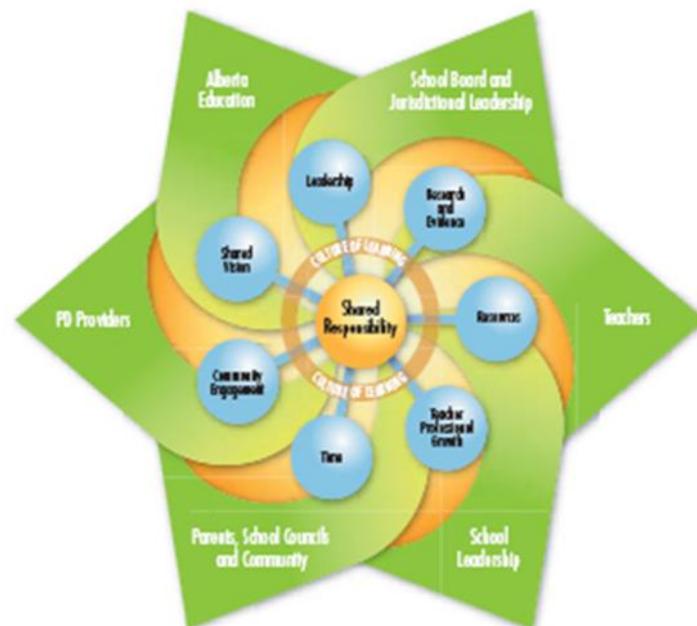
Third Academy has adopted this model as our goal at Third Academy is “student success”.

Student success necessitates collaboration: community engagement. It is recognized that successful educational outcomes can take place only when there is a commitment by all stakeholders – parents, teachers, principals, school administrators, Alberta Education, the larger community, etc. – to develop a shared understanding of and commitment to their respective roles and responsibilities. The green fins in the diagram below represent the key stakeholders: parents are included in the lower left fin.

Over the past two months, I have been reaching out to staff, parents, and the education com-

munity at large. External to Third Academy, my outreach includes Calgary Academy, Foothills Academy, Phoenix, Providence, Calgary Quest., Tourette Canada, and Mount Royal University.

To learn more about this model for improving student learning, visit essentialconditions.ca. Please note that this model is the most “macro” component of this newsletter. It is here that many of the specific areas I have addressed – Alberta Education, Governance, Human Resources, Facility/Plant, Programming, Fund Development, Professional Development, AISCA, and Community Development- intersect. I really like the concept of “a culture of learning” but I will leave that for another day!



FROM ME TO YOU

COMMUNICATING TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

New Projects

I am pleased that Third Academy is working to provide strategic financial services support to Calgary Quest. We continue to work collaborate with Providence Children's Centre and Renfrew Educational Services and view both agencies as feeder programs to Third Academy's Grade 1. To this end, I have already conducted 2 tours of families looking for Grade 1 placement for September 2016. Along with this, Third Academy's website will continue to be updated and we will shortly be revamping our brochure. I am also looking forward to reinigorating the HLC/Third Academy website homelearningconnections.ca by Christmas time to better serve our 262 home education students. Finally, I am keen to continue the conversation around developing an Early Child Services (ECS) program with a 'Third Academy twist'.

Regardless, this new initiative must be "systematically planned, systemic, and sustained". What is the purpose of getting involved in all these new projects: to serve families with children with special needs better than the day before and, in so doing, make Third Academy a stronger organization.

In Summary

I hope you enjoyed this issue of From Me To You with a view of Third Academy from the perspective of my desk. For more information about the points I raised, my door is open and the coffee is on. Please take a moment next Wednesday to commemorate the men and women who fought for the freedoms we are so privileged to enjoy. And look forward to a new edition of From Me To You in December.

Sunil Mattu, Executive Director



FROM ME TO YOU
SUNIL MATTU'S NEWSLETTER

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- Fully Accredited by Alberta Education
- Two schools serving students from Grades 1 through 12 at one central location
- A non-profit, charitable organization
- Doing whatever it takes to help your children succeed

We believe that how a person thinks, affects how they feel, and hence how they act.



We're on the web in full color: Visit us at:
thirdacademy.ca

“Third Academy gives hope... hope for kids, families, and our collective futures.”

Dr. S. Lal. Mattu, Third Academy Ambassador-at-Large

Success is a choice.

It's mine.

A child without education, is like a bird without wings.
~Tibetan proverb